



PROCUREMENT INFORMATION you NEED to KNOW

## **"The Workshop"**

### **PRE and POST EVENT SURVEY RESULTS ANALYSIS**



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Chicago District  
231 S. LaSalle Street, #1500  
Chicago, IL 60604

Prepared by: Bonita M. Carroll, Deputy for Small Business  
9/29/2016

# Survey Results

## EVENT SYNOPSIS

Procurement Information you Need to Know (PINK) "The Workshop," held Wednesday, August 3, 2016, was an event designed to deliver critical information to current, licensed women small business owners who may, or may not be certified Women Owned Small Business (WOSB) or Economically Disadvantaged Women Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) within targeted North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes-the standard used by Federal statistical agencies in classifying business establishments for the purpose of collecting, analyzing, and publishing statistical data related to the U.S. business economy. In an effort to proactively assist this small business concern identify deficiencies, provide enough lead time to resolve them prior to FY 2017 so their business may be better positioned to strategically compete for USACE procurement opportunities. Promotion of the event was delayed and did not occur until mid-July and included a posting on FedBizOpps (fbo.gov), the Chicago Districts website, and e-mail blasts. There were 77 registrants, and an on-site count of 53 attendees.

USACE Chicago District worked with the Economic Development Administration, Small Business Administration, General Services Administration, the Illinois Procurement Technical Assistance Center/Women Business Development Center, Women Impacting Public Policy (WIPP), and McDonald Hopkins LLC, a private-sector law firm, in addition to USACE Chicago District Contracting Officer and a Project Manager to address the economic impact women small business owners have on the regional economy, supplies and services USACE procures, FY 2016 socioeconomic goals, how to position your business to maximize procurement opportunities, the difference between federal, state and local government procurement, how to obtain and leverage WOSB/EDWOSB Certification for FY 2017 USACE procurement opportunities, GSA Schedules and which one(s) USACE uses, how USACE looks for competent, licensed and certified women small business owners, and what USACE Contracting Officers and Program Managers expect after contract award. Additionally, three current WOSBs with varying degrees of USACE contract experience - Gale Construction, Molter Corporation and STRATA Earth Services, served as panelists in *'Been There, Done That': Best Practices in Marketing WOSB/EDWOSB Certification to USACE*, and *Successful Project Completion* served and panelist sharing insight, keys to success and their respective challenges as WOSBs.

Following are the tabulated results from pre and post-event surveys disseminated at the event. This data will be used as a benchmark and a lessons- learned for the Chicago District to improve upon for future WOSB/EDWOSB events.



## THE PRE-EVENT SURVEY

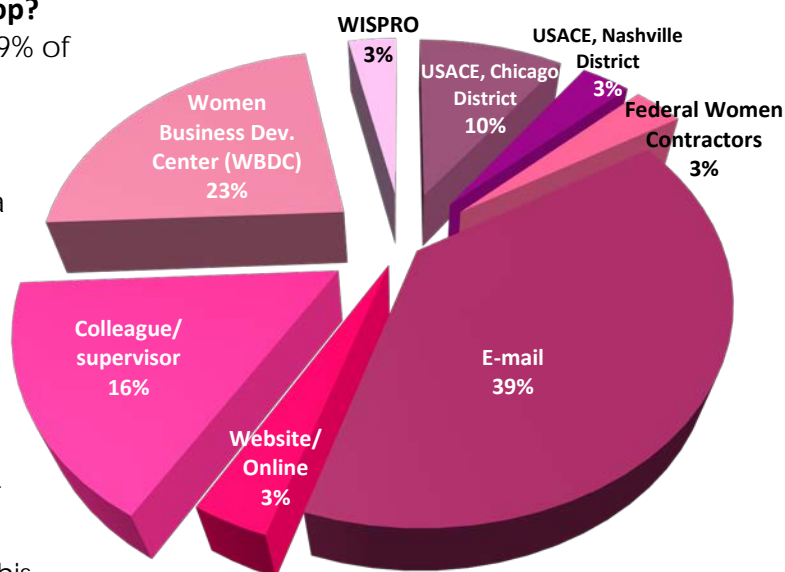
The Pre-Event survey was designed to measure registered attendee's level of knowledge prior to the workshop-a baseline to identify areas of improvement. Comprised of a total of eighteen questions, two with a part "a" and "b," the pre event survey was structured with eleven close - ended, and seven open-ended questions. Respondents name and contact information were optional. The results are as follows:

### Q1. How did you learn about this workshop?

Of the 31 Pre-Event surveys received, 39% of respondents stated they received an E-mail about PINK "The Workshop."

Twenty - three percent of respondents indicated they learned of the event via the Women's Business Development Center of which they may be a client. Some respondents noted they were informed by USACE Chicago or Nashville District Small Business Office sent. Unfortunately, most did NOT indicate what agency, organization, or individual sent them the e-mail. The question will be rephrased to capture this

information in future event surveys. The lead time in the Chicago District publicizing this event was unfortunately less than what it should have been. A better effort will be made to provide more advanced notice to targeted groups for planning purposes.

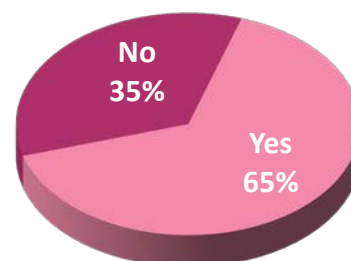


### Q2. Why did you choose to attend?

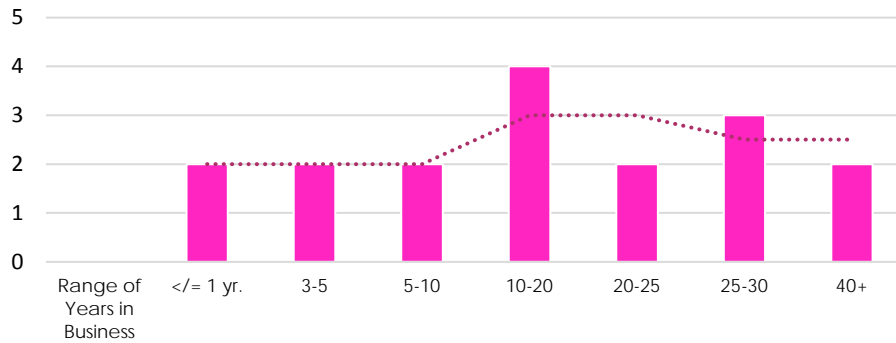
This open-ended question resulted in several responses ranging from "to learn about federal programs," "to learn more about contracting opportunities," "to learn more about USACE," "to learn about recent updates in federal contracting" "to learn about WOSB certification and new rules," "to network," "to learn how to get a USACE contract as I am having trouble," and "access to resources." These responses are reflective of the information planned to be presented.

### Q3a. Are you new to federal contracting?

There were 26 respondents to this two-part question. More than half, (65%) indicated they were new to federal contracting. Additionally, there was a significant dispersion of responses to the second part of this question, "How long have you been in business?" Of the 26 received, 9 respondents failed to indicate a response.

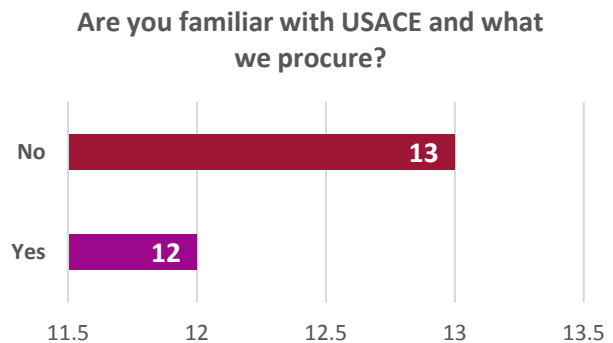


### How long Have You Been in Business?



#### Q4. Are you familiar with USACE and what we procure?

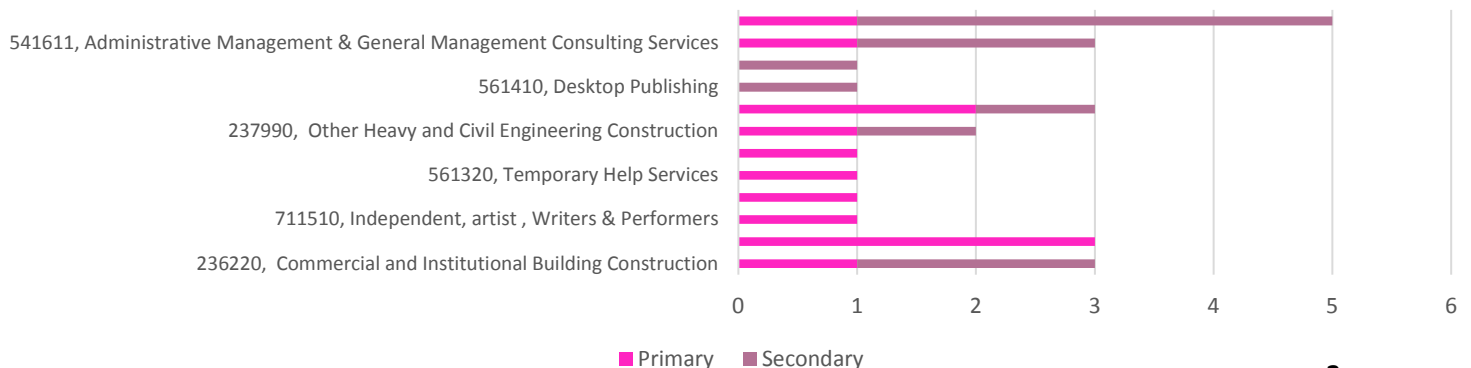
This question was asked to identify if attendees were aware of the products and services USACE- Chicago District procured. Only 25 respondents addressed this question. Forty-eight percent indicated they were familiar with what USACE procured, while very close but slightly more, fifty two percent were not familiar with USACE.



#### Q5. What is your primary and secondary NAICS Code?

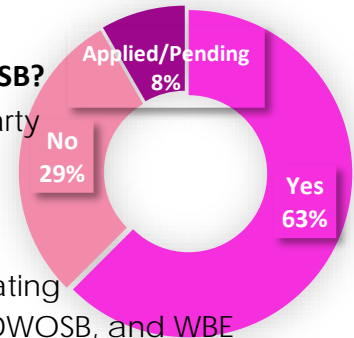
For FY 2013-2015, the Top 5 primary NAICS Codes for the Chicago District were: 237990- Other Heavy and Civil Engineering Construction, 238290-Other Building Equipment Contractors, 541330- Engineering Services, 541310 - Architectural Services, and 561210- Facilities Support Services. PINK "The Workshop" data shows the primary NAICS code represented was 541310-Architectural Services, followed by 541620-Environmental Consulting Services. A significant number of firms noted 541330- Engineering Services as their secondary NAICS code, followed by 236220-Commercial and Industrial Building Construction.

### What is your primary and secondary NAICS Codes?



**Q6. Are you currently an SBA or 3<sup>rd</sup> Party certified WOSB or EDWOSB?**

A majority of respondents (63%), noted they were SBA or 3<sup>rd</sup> party Women Owned Small Business (WOSB) or Economically Disadvantaged Women Owned Small Business (EDWOSB) Certified. Twenty-nine percent indicated they were not, while 8% have applied with applications pending. As a note, educating small business owners about the difference between WOSB/EDWOSB, and WBE certification will be an ongoing effort as in conversations with some new small business owners, there appears to be a misunderstanding that WBE certification is an accepted certification not only by state and local government, but federal government as well.

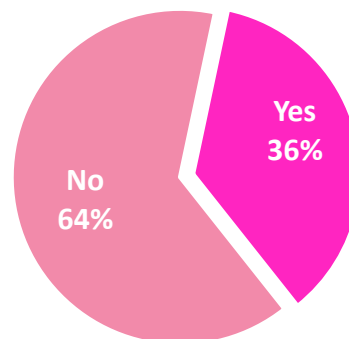


**Q7. What Other Federal Certifications Do You Have?**

The results of this opened-ended question supports my belief confusion exists about certifications accepted by the federal government and those accepted by state/local government. Of the 11 responses received, 5 listed WBE, DBE and SBE certifications.

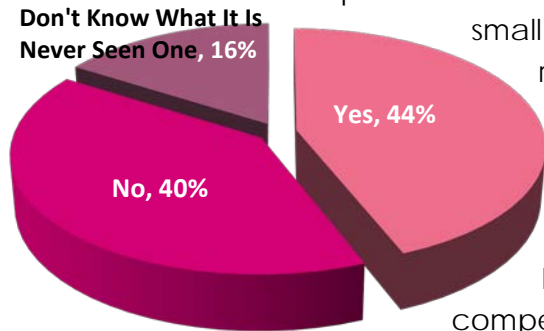
**Q8a. Have You Ever Bid or Submitted an RFP for a USACE Contracting Opportunity?**

This question was posed to help gauge how active attendees are in competing for USACE contracts. Thirty-six percent (36%) of respondents indicated they have bid or submitted an RFP for a USACE contract, while 64% had not. The second part of this question, **Q8b.** asked, **if they were the successful bidder, or had the successful RFP.** Of the 36% that submitted a bid or RFP in Q8a, slightly more than half--55%, stated they were successful, while 45% were not.



### Q9. Do You Respond to Sources Sought Notices?

"Sources Sought," a form of market research conducted via the Government Point of Entry (GPE) to identify potential firms interested in a specific project, can be used to limit competition whereas a solicitation can be "set-aside" for a specific



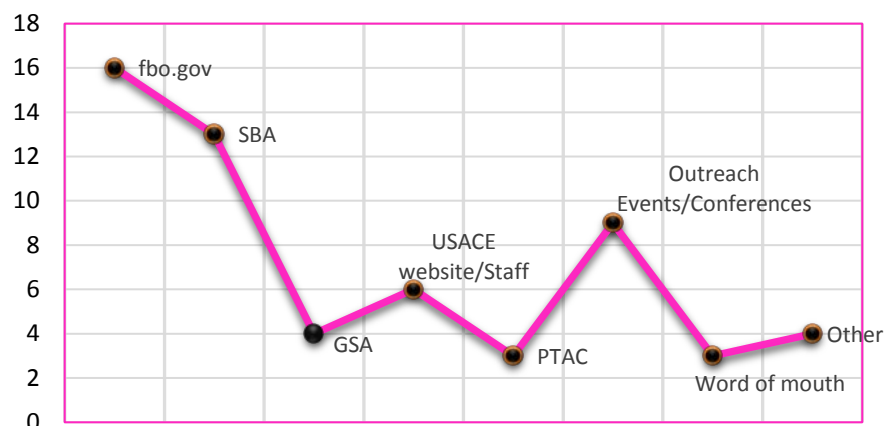
small business concern, i.e. WOSB, if adequate responses are received. Surprisingly, 40% of respondents indicated they have not/do not respond to Sources Sought while 44% had/do, and 16% stated they were unfamiliar with sources sought-"did not know what it was, and had never seen one." What is even more

compelling is of those who stated "No," two have been in business more than forty years. These particular respondents neglected to include their NAICS code. This may indicate they may not have federal work experience. Additional results revealed; three respondents have been in business between less than 1 year, and four years. One respondent is a certified EDWOSB; and one respondent has been in business for eleven years. Continued education emphasizing the importance of responding to Sources Sought Notices is key to helping WOSBs/EDWOSBs realize benefit to responding-how responding helps reduce the competitive 'playing field,' that this "tool" can provide leverage in competing, and result in possible award of a USACE contract.

### Q10. How Do You Prefer to Learn About USACE Contracting Opportunities?

The intent of this question was to identify 'go-to' resources attendees utilize to learn about USACE contracting opportunities, and ensure the Chicago District is incorporating them into our communication channels. Only 16 attendees elected to respond to this

How Do You Prefer to Learn About USACE Contracting Opportunities?



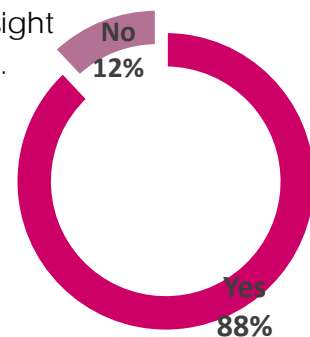
question. Eight multiple-choice selection options were given. Results indicate that **Federal Business Opportunities**, commonly referred to as FedBizOpps, at [www.fbo.gov](http://www.fbo.gov),

led as the most preferred with 28%. Being that fbo.gov is the designated GPE, it would, by default, be the most preferred choice. Following as a second preference was the Small Business Administration (SBA)-a critical resource, with 13 responses (22%). Outreach Events/Conferences was third with 9 responses (16%), followed by USACE website/Staff with 6 responses (10%). GSA and Other tied at 7%, with PTAC and Word of Mouth both at 5%. The Chicago District is working on launching a more robust Small Business webpage during the first quarter of FY 2017.

### **Q12. Are You Familiar with Teaming and Joint Ventures?**

On June 30, 2016, the SBAs final rule change become effective regarding Small Business Government Contracting and the National Defense Authorization Act of 2013. Question 12 was asked to identify attendee's familiarity with teaming and joint ventures (JVs). Attorney, Michelle Kantor of McDonald Hopkins LLC presented insight regarding these changes and the increased benefit they provide.

For **Q13. Have you ever used teaming and JVs as a strategy to respond to a contract opportunity?** Of the 88% of attendees familiar with teaming and JVs, 59% have used them as a strategy to respond to a contract opportunity, while 41% indicated they have not used them as a strategy.



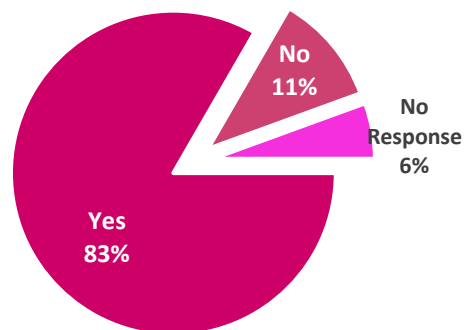
## THE POST-EVENT SURVEY

Seventeen attending Small Business Concerns (SBC) submitted a completed post-event survey which was comprised of 9 close-ended, and 3 open-ended questions. The intent of the post-event survey was to assess if attendees found value from the presentations, questions, and networking to and identify how USACE Chicago District can improve in delivering workshops to women small business owners in the future.

### Q1. Did this workshop meet your expectations?

We posed this question to ascertain if PINK "The Workshop" was what attendees thought it would be. Of the responses received 83% indicated that the workshop did meet their expectation. Two respondents included comments such as "great" and "excellent workshop." Conversely, there were two respondents who indicated the workshop failed to meet their expectation as it was "very elementary" - "for beginners" and "wanted more information about the agency." Overall, the majority of attendees found the workshop to be of value, and met their expectations. The USACE Chicago District will work to not only meet, but exceed attendee's expectations for future business events.

Did PINK "The Workshop" Meet Your Expectations?



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### Q2. If we held a future matchmaking event with large businesses, would you attend?

The purpose of this question was to identify interest among SBCs to frame the basis for a possible future USACE Chicago District event targeting both large and small businesses. The overall consensus on this question was a resounding, "yes" as 100% of respondents indicated they would attend a future matchmaking event with large businesses. As regulations are expected to change October 1<sup>st</sup> regarding teaming and joint ventures, USACE Chicago may consider hosting or co-hosting such an event.



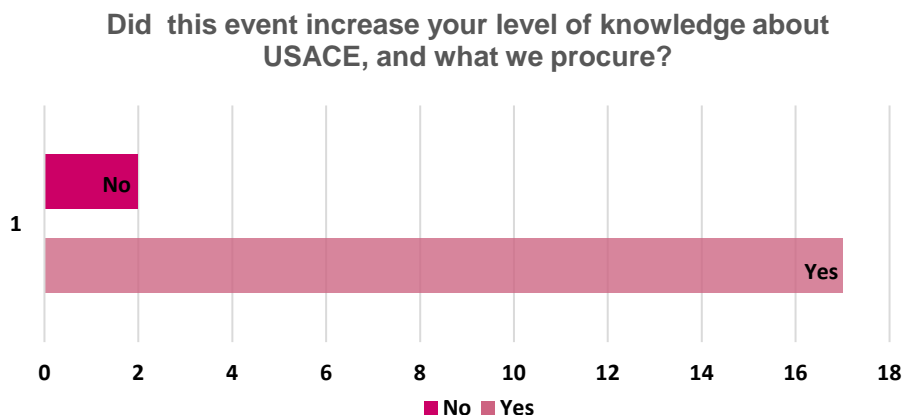
### Q3. Did this event increase your level of knowledge about USACE and what we procure?

In an effort to determine if presenter's information, networking, and questions and answers aided in

better helping  
increase what  
attendees now  
know about the  
US Army Corps of  
Engineers, what  
we do, and what  
we buy, eighty-  
nine percent, or  
17 out of 19

responding SBCs

noted that PINK "The Workshop, increased their level of knowledge about USACE, and what we procure. Of the 11% of respondents that indicated the event did not increase their level of knowledge, it is interesting to note that this respondent also stated in (Q1) that the workshop was "very elementary" - for "beginners," therefore supporting the response in Q3.



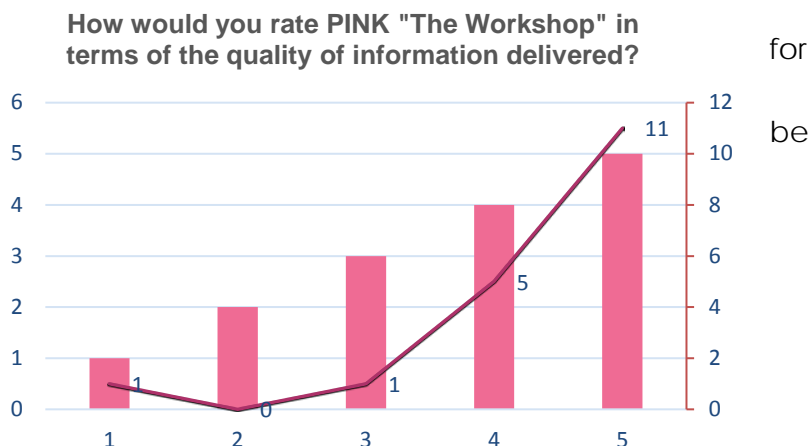
### Q4. Would you recommend this event to a women small business owner if held again?

In considering the possibility of hosting PINK "The Workshop" again in the future, this question was asked to identify if indeed, current attendees would recommend it to other women small business owners. One hundred percent (100%) of respondents indicated they would recommend the event, if held again. This response is indicative of the value the event afforded, its impact, and the attendees overall experience positively resonated that they would recommend it, if held again.

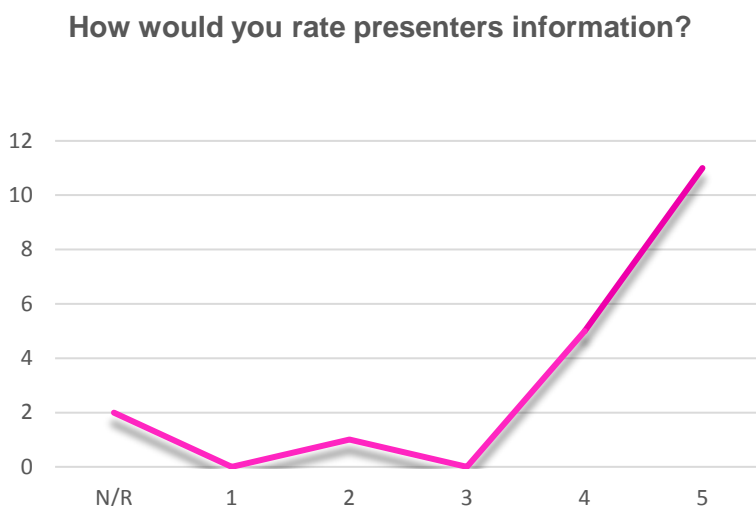
### Q5. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate PINK "The Workshop" overall in terms of quality of information delivered?

This question was asked to satisfy a curiosity if attendees felt they received quality information they perceived was of value. Using a scale of 1-5, with one being the lowest; and 5 being the highest, we were pleased to learn the majority of respondents believed that the information delivered at PINK "The Workshop" was of quality with the majority giving a '5', followed by "4". One respondent stated it did not meet their expectation due to being "unprepared" needing to "master the technology" with respect to microphones and PowerPoint; presenters should also identify acronyms (i.e. SAM, PTAC, NAICS and DSBS) at the beginning of their presentations and, in addition,

we should provide a “username and password Guest Wi-Fi”. These are noted deficiencies that will be addressed and incorporated in future events to ensure attendees have an improved event experience.



**Q6. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate PINK “The Workshop” Presenters information?**



Fifty-eight percent (58%) of respondents rated PINK presenters with a ‘5’-the highest rating, followed by 26% rated them with a ‘4’ resulting in total positive 84% rating. Conversely, there was one low rating of ‘2’ which is consistent with the same respondent that indicated presenters should identify acronyms. Additionally, there were two received with No Response (NR).

**Q7. If not currently a WOSB or EDWOSB, are you now considering becoming certified?**

There was an overwhelming (74%) “YES” response to this question, with an exception of 21% indicating “not applicable” as they were already WOSB certified, and 5% providing no response. These results are reflective of how education and raising awareness can effect positive change. The Small Business Administration’s (SBA) and Women’s business Development Center’s presentations, coupled with questions and answers (Q&A) aided in helping attendees realize the benefit of becoming a certified WOSB/ EDWOSB.

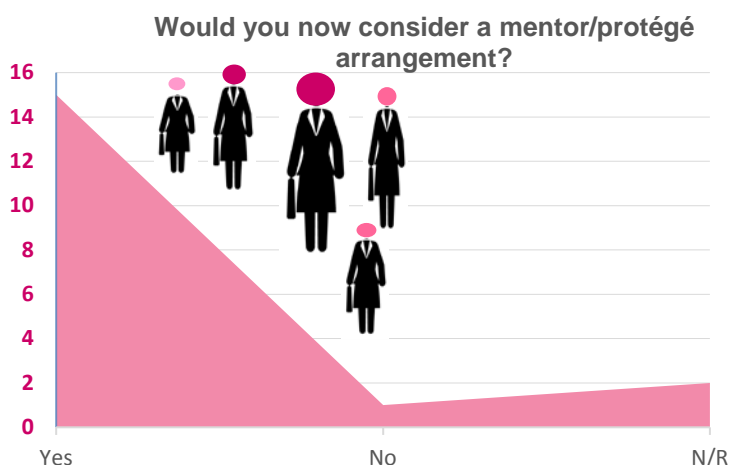
## Q8. What would you recommend USACE Chicago District improve upon for future information events?

Responses to this open-ended question follow. USACE Chicago District will review and incorporate as much of these comments as possible to improve attendee experience and delivery of critical information that will afford prospective vendors maximum practicable opportunity to compete for USACE contracts.

- "Separate new and established businesses, or offer a Q&A session only"
- "Reserve more time for questions from the audience"
- "Have presentations queued up"
- "Make time for questions between presentations"
- "Master the technology-microphones, have computer driven presentation"
- "Identify all acronyms"
- "Identify a capability statement and NAICS code"
- "Provide username and password for Wi-Fi"
- "Provide contact information for all speakers"
- "Improve agenda and event planning, provide more about upcoming plans and programs"
- "Work with presenters ahead of time to focus presentations"
- "Provide more space for networking and breakout sessions with speakers"
- "Have large businesses attend, have longer session with contract attorney"
- "More advance notice, more time to network, and tighter leash on Q&A—keep on schedule"
- "Move event to a better location"
- "Networking"
- "List of websites presenters used, ...contact information, and access to presentations"

## Q9a. As a result of the information shared today, would you consider a mentor/protégé arrangement?

This was a two-part question with (a) focused on mentor-protégé, and (b) on Teaming/joint ventures arrangements. Eighty-three percent (83%) of attendees



indicated that after the information shared, they would consider a mentor/protégé arrangement, while 6% would not, and 11% of attendees were unresponsive. This is encouraging news, especially with the pending launch of the SBAs new small business mentor-protégé program on October 1, 2016. This program, used as a "tool," may assist in opening doors to position more women small

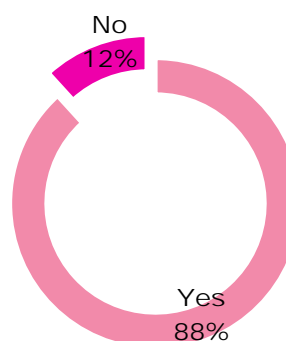
business owners to be capable to better compete for USACE contracts.

**Q9b. Teaming/Joint Venture arrangement?** In light of regulation changes effective August 24th, this question was presented to identify the level of heightened awareness, and desire to pursue a teaming/joint venture as the SBA's new regulation changes the definition of a joint venture to exclude populated entities. The revised regulation, which will appear in 13 C.F.R. 121.103(h), defines a joint venture, in relevant part, as follows:

*For purposes of this provision, and in order to facilitate tracking of the number of contract awards made to a joint venture, a joint*

*venture: must be in writing and must do business under its own name; must be identified as a joint venture in the System for Award Management (SAM); may be in the form of a formal or informal partnership or exist as a separate limited liability company or other separate legal entity; and, if it exists as a formal separate legal entity, may not be populated with individuals intended to perform contracts awarded to the joint venture (i.e., the joint venture may have its own separate employees to perform administrative functions, but may not have its own separate employees to perform contracts awarded to the joint venture).*

**Would you now consider a Teaming/  
Joint Venture arrangement?**



**Q10. Specifically, what other types of information would be helpful for you to better compete for USACE supplies and services? |**

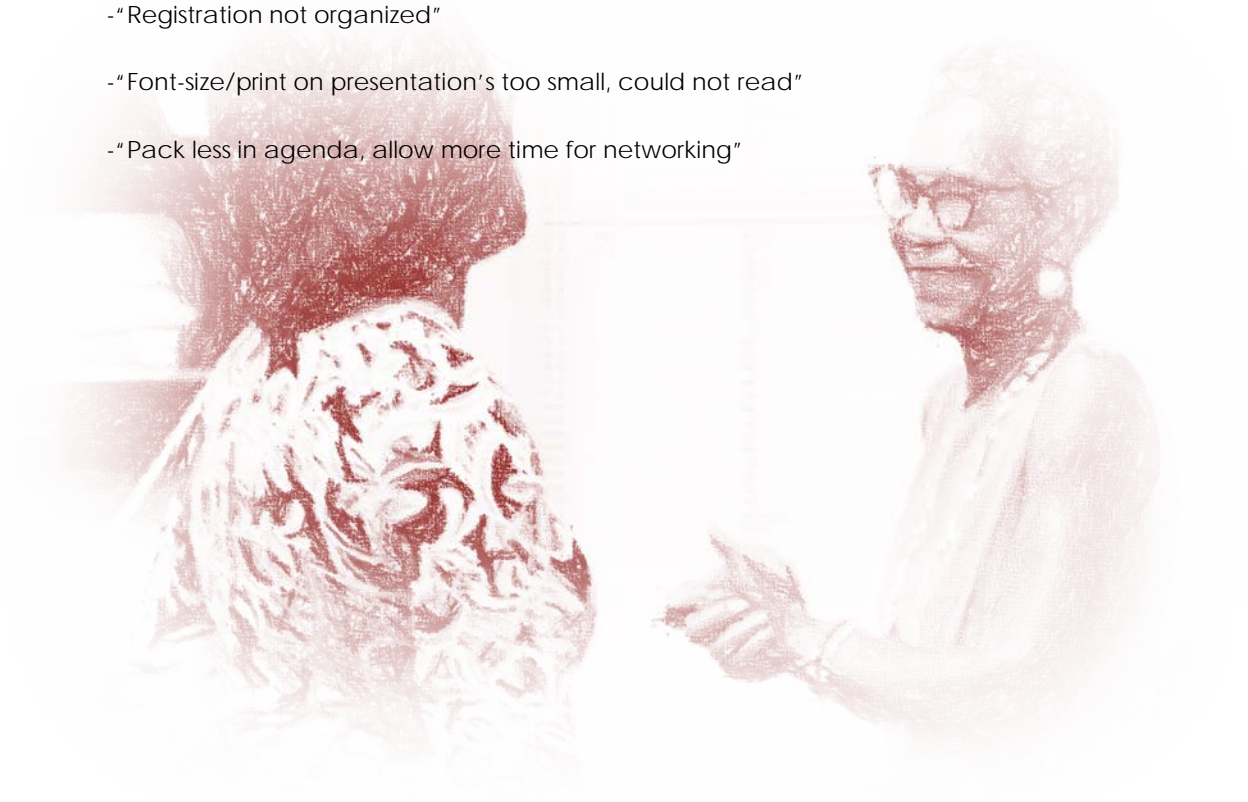
This open-ended, and direct question was posed so attendees would be forthcoming about what specific information would be helpful for them to better compete for USACE contracts. The responses are as follows:

- "To know more about USACE and the RFP submittal process"
- "To know more about what USACE wants to see in RFP submittals"
- "To see the procurement opportunities and sources sought online", "...more technical education such as QC (quality control) specifications, and submittals"
- "More information on small business certification-not just woman – owned"
- "More about growing & competing as a WOSB, this is too elementary"
- "How to follow-up on Sources Sought"
- "Does USACE, Chicago work with the City of Chicago?"
- "Networking"
- "Presentations focused on construction & goods/services, not architects"
- "IT –related subcontracting"

**Q11. Is there anything else you wish to let us know?**

This last open-ended question was posed to query attendees about anything they wished to advise us of. Responses are intended to be reviewed and incorporate as many as appropriate. They are as follows:

- “USACE RFPs often have an extra question about work done with USACE—how do I get a USACE contract if you want me to have experience with USACE, but I can’t get the experience without winning the contract?”
- “ Confirmation of attendance”
- “ Watch time management, Make sure speakers are clear on their time limits”
- “ Great job, thanks”
- “ Love the enthusiasm from speakers”
- “ Not handicapped-friendly”
- “ Name not on list though confirmation was received”
- “ Registration not organized”
- “ Font-size/print on presentation’s too small, could not read”
- “ Pack less in agenda, allow more time for networking”





## SUMMARY

The tabulated results from the **Pre-Event Survey** reflect that the majority of respondents learned of PINK “The Workshop” largely from e-mail, and the Women’s Business Development Center, followed by a colleague, or supervisor (Question 1). Respondents’ rationale for attending (Question 2) was varied, as expected, and the majority (65%) were new to federal contracting and the mode of years of experience between, 10-20 years.

The results also showed an almost even split between those who were familiar with what USACE Chicago District procures and those unfamiliar. There was also a close split in those who responded to Sources Sought Notices and those who did not (Question 9). The largest represented NAICS Code attending was 514310 - Architectural Services with 541620 - Environmental Consulting Services following second. A surprising number (63%) of responses received indicated they were SBA or 3rd party WOSB/EDWOSB certified. Additionally, with respect to other certifications noted WBE, DBE and SBE as “other federal certifications” It is my opinion further education is needed informing small businesses of State and local government certifications, and Federal government certifications.

One of the most interesting Pre-Event Survey results was from (Question 10) *How Do you Prefer to Learn About USAC Contracting Opportunities?* With Federal Business Opportunities (FedBizOpps) being the GPE, it is a given this would rank highest; following suit were the SBA and Outreach Events/Conferences. This demonstrates the value of incorporating a multi-pronged approach to disseminate information about USACE procurement opportunities that includes fbo.gov, Outreach Events/Conferences, the SBA, and other federal, state and local agencies. A better effort in noting procurement opportunities on the USACE Chicago District is on the horizon in FY 2017.

**Post Event Survey** results showed the majority of attendees indicated PINK “The Workshop” met their expectations, delivered quality information with highly-rated presenter who increased their level of knowledge, and would recommend to a women small business owner, if held again. Additionally, if the event was expanded to include large businesses, they would be inclined to attend. Of the attendees who were not certified WOSB/EDWOSB stated, 74% of the respondents indicated they are now considering becoming certified.

Several suggestions were provided about information USACE can provide that would help women small business owners better compete for USACE contracts. In FY 17, the USACE Chicago District will strive to provide more value-added information to better assist potential contractors help us execute our mission within Chicago, nationally, and internationally.